

Management scheme for Bigwood

Bigwood and Little Wood were almost certainly once part of a much larger ancient forest. By 1746 they appear on Roque's map of this area as two distinct woods. Most of the oaks growing at present date from the first half of the 19th century, though there is botanical evidence to suggest that there was oak cover here at least from the mid-18th century.

In the last 180 to 200 years the woods have matured into high forest and many understorey species have gradually regenerated, including a few associated with ancient wood sites.

Diversity

Bigwood now contains a surprising diversity of trees and shrubs; at least 22 species, including wild service, guelder rose, crab apples, wild cherry, hornbeam, ash, wild plum, field maple, whitebeam, midland hawthorn and rowan. There are over 55 species of ground and field flora, including wood anemone, lords and ladies, yellow archangel, bluebell, field rose and honeysuckle, together with remote sedge, wood sedge, wood millet and ramsons which are regionally uncommon.

Many of the trees and shrubs are regenerating quite well at present but there are very few young oaks and so some intervention is necessary. Through the co-operation of the Residents Association's Trees and Open Spaces Committee and Barnett's Countryside Officer, a group has been formed to look after the wood. It consists of members of the Committee



and the Countryside Officer, together with various residents, representatives of local bodies and wildlife associations and Councillor Shutz as Chairman.

Sensitive management

Their aim is to develop a sensitive management scheme based on the brief produced by the London Ecology Unit, the main objectives being to promote natural oak regeneration to improve the local ground flora and further encourage the rich bird life.

New glades

Particular emphasis will be placed on maintaining the visual beauty and wild aspects of the place. It has been decided that the best way to achieve this is gradually to create about six small glades beneath naturally occurring gaps in the high forest canopy, thereby avoiding the felling of mature trees.

The glades will be scattered

about the wood and their maximum size will be 175 sq. m (13m by 13m approx.). Their position will be chosen very carefully to avoid disturbance to the rarer species of trees and shrubs, the vulnerable ground flora and interesting specimens that are noteworthy for their antiquity and/or their unusual growth forms. Most of the glades will be situated away from the main paths and be as inconspicuous as possible. They will be carefully monitored by the group, with much of the recording being carried out by the London Wildlife Trust. In order to protect the vulnerable new growth from being trodden down, they will be surrounded by dead hedging made from the cut branches, which will also provide cover for small birds. If regeneration is disappointing, trees, shrubs and flowers of local provenance will be planted. It was suggested that the Henrietta Barnett School might take part in the collection and sprouting of acorns. The compartment cut in 1992 will be treated differently. A broad band of mature trees and shrubs will be left around the edges and the central part divided into four and cut in a rotation of six to eight years.

Semi natural

This management plan allows many parts of Bigwood to be left alone so it can continue to mature in a semi-natural way. This has already produced some special features such as interesting hazel specimens, two old crab apples averaging 143 years of age, not forgetting an oddity in the form of a twin-stemmed mountain ash 22 metres high.

One of the most notable developments has been the natural regeneration of wild service trees. An uncommon tree, it occurs mainly in the southern half of England where it is often sporadic, but here in Bigwood it appears to like the shady leaf litter and general conditions and has suckered freely, producing over 100 trees and saplings. This growth will be carefully protected as it is important to encourage wild stands and safeguard their integrity into a new generation.

Come and help

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers would like local people to come along on 16 and 17 November and on 14 December to help to create the first glades. Meet at the Temple Fortune Hill entrance from 10am onwards. You will be shown what to do and provided with tools.

Anyone between 5 and 85 years old will be covered by insurance. Under-16s should be accompanied by an adult.

SUSAN OSBORN

Lutyens Day

From Cornwall to Scotland they came: well over 250 visitors (a number of them architects) keen to see Hampstead Garden Suburb on London's sunny 'Open House' day, 21 September, which was also our 'Lutyens Day'. Not only were the churches open but some of Lutyens' houses too. Said one participating householder: "How much we enjoyed it... the visitors proved immensely interesting: a day to treasure".

Lutyens' Free Church and Friends Meeting House (by Rowntree) were open but St Jude's was the focal point, with organ music by Elgar (friend of Lutyens), delicious teas, talks - one by Lutyens grand-daughter/biographer Jane Ridley - with a flow of questions afterwards.

A brisk trade was had at the Garden Suburb Gallery's stall in one aisle and a throng around the Archive Trusts display in another.



Lutyens' grand daughter Jane Ridley and Alan Walker in the garden of St Jude's Lutyens built vicarage.

Organised by the Events Committee of the RA, the occasion also highlighted the work of its Conservation and Amenities Committee; but above all it was

a reminder of our privilege to live in an area so widely appreciated as part of the national heritage. See Consam talk p 6.

ELIZABETH GUNDREY

The Information Super Highway reaches the Suburb

Hampstead Garden Suburb is now part of the information super highway, the Internet, thanks to Corringway resident Steve Morris.

Steve in his own time and at his own expense has created the *Hampstead Garden Suburb Web Site* which will enable people across the world to take a virtual stroll through our beautiful environment. Fans of the Suburb from Tokyo to New Delhi can take a look from their living room. And of course so can you.

The site already has a lot of interesting information about the Suburb and its architecture and details about the activities of the RA. Any organisation active in the Suburb is also welcome to supply information which can be kept on the site. A continuously updated 'What's On' page will also feature shortly.

On the Internet any information which changes can be updated almost immediately. Unlike the traditional media, you don't have to wait until the next edition of a periodical to obtain information. You look for what you want, when you want.

But the Internet is not just an electronic picture book. It is also a very convenient means of communication. Steve and I are setting up an E Mail Discussion Group (also known as a list server in computerese).

The Discussion Group will be open to anyone living in the Suburb or who has a genuine interest in the Suburb or its activities. Once you join the list, you can send Email messages to the list and the message will be forwarded to the other members of the list. Anyone is free to join or leave the list when they like. If anyone misbehaves by posting unsuitable messages, they can be denied access.

We also hope to compile a private E Mail Directory of Suburb Residents which gives names and E Mail addresses which we will maintain on the basis that only other Suburb residents will be able to access the list with a password. Anyone who uses E mail knows how much more convenient it is to use than fax or letter.

So if you are already on the Internet take a look at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Web Site which you will find at www.hgs.org.uk.

If you are interested in

joining the E Mail Discussion Group when it starts, either follow the instructions at the Web site - or if there is none when you call send me an E mail to david.lewis@cheerful.com.

If you don't already have access to the Internet, you will need a *computer* (PC or Apple), a *modem* which connects your computer to your phone line (most new computers come with one included) and a telephone (you won't be able to use the phone in the ordinary way while you are connected to the Internet).

A subscription to an Internet Service Provider costs about £10 a month; you also pay for local phone calls while you are connected. If you want only Email, the cost is about £20 a year. If you want to know more, buy a magazine about the Internet from a newsagent.

DAVID LEWIS

• For a free demonstration of the Suburb Website and the Internet on Saturday 15 November at Corringway, phone Steve Morris for an appointment on 209 1671.

Telephone 0181 458 4422



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